

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – Restoring Dominion – 2-8 July 2016

Christ overcame Satan to restore dominion. Of the lost dominion, we read: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26). In the beginning, the dominion was given to man (Genesis 1:26-28). When man, the first Adam, sinned, he lost the dominion; Christ became man, the last Adam, to restore the dominion.

A dominion is a kingdom; to have dominion is to have kingly authority. Therefore since the earth was given to man for a dominion, the earth was designed for man’s kingdom. To this intent David speaks in the eighth psalm, where he says of man: “For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas” (Psalms 8:5-8). The apostle quotes this (Hebrews 2:7-8), and makes the further statement that “now we see not yet all things put under him.” This being the case, it must be because man has lost the dominion, for it was certainly given to him. In the words of the apostle, therefore, we have at once a statement of the loss of the dominion first given to man, and a promise of its restoration.

Now Christ came to redeem what Adam lost, and so when the apostle quotes the words of the Psalmist, when he says that God set man over the works of His hands, but that “now we see not yet all things put under him,” he adds: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:9, 14-15).

In order that Christ might redeem man from the curse of death which came upon him when he yielded to Satan, He had to suffer the same curse. Thus Paul says: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Galatians 3:13). And so, to redeem the earth, He bore its curse, when the crown of thorns was placed upon His head (Compare Genesis 3:13, 18 and Matthew 27:29). As Christ has, by death, gained the right to destroy the one who has power over death, that is, the devil, He has also won the right to the dominion that Satan usurped.

And so the prophet Micah addresses Christ in the following language: “And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:8). In these words we have the promise of the restoration of the first dominion (see Genesis 1:28), and not to Adam, who lost it, but to Christ the second Adam, who redeemed it. Those who through faith recover themselves out of the snare of the devil; who learn of Jesus to be meek and lowly in heart, will inherit the earth with Christ, when He shall take possession of it as His kingdom.

God is “the great King.” Man was made in His image, and was His son, so that he was created a prince. He was given dominion over the works of God’s hands, but this dominion was not an arbitrary thing. Man was not merely appointed king, but he was made a king. The authority was in him. “For there is no power but of God” (Romans 13:1). Man in himself has no more power than the dust of which he is made; but since the everlasting power and Divinity of God are seen in all the things that He has made, it was but natural that in the highest of God’s creatures this power should be manifested in the highest degree. The royal authority that was given to man in the beginning was the fulness of God’s presence in him.

God set man over the works of His hands. These works of God’s hands include all that God made in the beginning. It was no small dominion that was given to man. The heavens and the earth that were made “in the beginning” were put in subjection under his feet. The fish of the sea, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air were to obey his will, and to come and go at his command; and the very earth itself was to be subject to him. This is plainly set forth in the first of Genesis. It seems almost incredible that such power was given

to man, yet we are bound to believe it, because God's Word says so. Why should we not be glad to believe it? for "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Ecclesiastes 3:14).

Nevertheless we do not now see all things put under man. On the contrary, we see man for the most part weighed down under the burdens of this earth. Why is this? – It is not of God's appointment. It is rather because man sinned, and lost the glory with which he was crowned. His authority consisted solely in the righteousness which God's presence gave him; and when he rejected the Lord and lost the righteousness, he necessarily lost the dominion. The sceptre of Christ's kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness (Hebrews 1:8).

But Jesus tasted death for every man, and because of this He is crowned with glory and honour. This crown He has as man, for it was as the Son of man that He tasted death for every man. Therefore as man He now has the dominion which God in the beginning gave to man. All power in heaven and in earth is in His hands (Matthew 28:18). Remember that this power is in His hands as man, – the representative man, – for as the express image of His Father He had it all before He ever came to earth, His Father had never given up His right as Lord over all, and it was not necessary for Christ to come to earth to establish that claim; what He came for was to become man, and as man to win back what man lost. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:21).

Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). He was the Son of God before He was raised from the dead, just as much as afterwards (Matthew 3:17), but it was the resurrection from the dead that demonstrated the fact. It was by the Spirit of holiness that He was raised. He was raised because as the Son of God He was holy. This same Spirit of holiness – the Spirit of adoption – God has given us, so that we are sons of God, even as Jesus Christ is. It doth not yet appear what we shall be (1 John 3:2); the world does not recognise us as sons of God, just as it did not recognise Christ as the Son of God; but the resurrection will prove the fact. The resurrection will not make us sons, but will make the fact evident to all.

Jesus Christ, having been raised from the dead, was raised above all principality and power, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. The world to come is the new earth, and it was the new earth over which God in the beginning gave man dominion. Christ, therefore, as the Son of man, having by the Spirit of holiness that dwelt in Him been shown to be also the Son of God, has the very same dominion that man in the beginning had as the son of God. And this He has for every man, since by the grace of God He "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Therefore in Him we are raised to the dominion which man lost through sin. It is true that we do not now see all things in subjection under man, that is under all mankind, yet it is a fact that this dominion is given to those who are in Christ. Those who exercise it are those who do realise "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18). "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath set the world upon them" (1 Samuel 2:8).

Evidences of the reality of this power as a present possession have when occasion demanded been seen not only in the Man Christ Jesus, but also in those who were His followers. To all it is said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). The Lord wishes us to understand that Jesus of Nazareth was not a unique specimen, but that He was God's idea of what every man ought to be. It is only as one comes "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," that he is "a perfect man" (Ephesians 4:13). Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father" (John 14:12). There was no power manifested in Jesus that has not also been manifested in some of His faithful followers. God is not partial with His children. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7).

We may never perform what are termed miracles, but we nevertheless need the power, for nothing less than the fulness of the power which God gave to man in the beginning, and which is now in "the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5), can enable us to conquer sin and Satan. And "power and authority over all devils" (Luke 9:1) is needed by every person who overcomes, for we have an entire host to contend with. Thank God, this power is given to us!